



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913  
PH (517) 373.6920 | FAX (517) 373.2751  
[www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/kuipers/](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/kuipers/)

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Contact: Darin Ackerman  
517-373-6920

## **Sen. Kuipers' marriage-protection bill moves to full Senate**

**LANSING** – The Senate Judiciary Committee today recommended passage of a proposal of Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, that would allow parenting plans for children to be used in cases of divorce. His measure is part of a package of bills that aims to prepare couples for stronger marriages and, in cases of divorce, lessen the negative effect on children.

“While I believe the best thing for children is to have parents in a strong, healthy marriage, not every marriage lasts,” Kuipers said. “My proposal would help protect children by having courts use parenting plans created by the parents.”

Under Kuipers' bill, Senate Bill 966, parents could create parenting plans. Courts would have to accept the plan unless judges determine the plan isn't in the child's best interest. The plan would detail custody arrangements and authority for making decisions regarding the children.

Other parts of the marriage-protection package focus on trying to preserve marriages by:

- Encouraging premarital education or counseling;
- Allowing a retired clergy member to continue to legally offer marriage counseling;
- Providing a marriage preservation tax credit; and,
- Promoting divorce-effects education programs.

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